

[Mrs. Mary Snider]

[???

Mrs. C. M. Cohea

Amarillo, Texas

District #16 PANHANDLE PIONEERS

Mrs. Mary Snider

709 Johnson

Amarillo, Texas

Mrs. Snider came to the Panhandle in June, 1886, 52 years ago. During this time she has seen many changes take place on the plains, both for better and worse. Mrs. Snider lived at Old Tascosa during the less colorful years of that famous old cowtown's hectic career. There was shooting, but no scenes like those depicted in screen versions of the wild and woolly West. Shot gun law was still in effect. Careless gunmen died with their boots on and were buried in Boot Hill graveyard.

Mac Armstrong, brother of Mrs. Snider, was the first person to carry the mail on the Star route established in 1878 between Fort Elliott and Mobeetie and Fort Bascoms and Las Vegas. He carried the mail on horseback once a week. Mr. Armstrong had been in Tascosa nine years before his sister came. His third child was the first white child born in the Panhandle.

Mr. Armstrong, who died in 1937, was writing a book of frontier life, which was begun by him at the age of nine years. Relatives plan to have the book completed and published.

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Mrs. Snider and all Tascosa knew Frenchy McCormick, the much written about belle of Mickey McCormick's gambling and dance hall. Mrs. Snider recalls that the respectable element of the town had nothing to do with Frenchy and the other girls of her class. Frenchy married Mickey McCormick after they had lived together a long time at Tascosa. Mrs. Snide often sewed for the girls of the red light district, but had no further intercourse with them, knew nothing of their lives. They did not come on the streets except during the day to buy the necessary things of life for themselves. Styles which she made for them were conservative for daytime wear. She did not make the clothes they wore in the dance halls. Dresses had long sleeves, high necklines, bustle effects, and voluminous skirts. Petticoats had numerous ruffles and were worn several at a time.

Mrs. Snider remembers Sunday school and church being held in the Tascosa school-[house?], which has been in constant use in recent years. Social affairs were also held in the building. Another old building was a fort on the Mexican side of the river.

Mrs. Snider, herself a competent nurse for years , later, in Amarillo, knew Dr. [?], the first doctor in the Panhandle, and also Dr. Shelton, another pioneer physician. There was not sufficient practice to keep them in funds, so both became cowboys at one time or another.

Mexican plaza to the south of the river had a crude sort of irrigation system, [?] ditches dug from a nearby creek to water the gardens of the plaza.

Some white folks lived in this plaza. Mac Armstrong assisted at the birth of a baby to Mrs. Dobbs, a resident of this section of Old Tascosa. Mr. Armstrong help [?] childbirth several times, since he had a knowledge of medical proceedure. Many of the women helped one another at such times, one helping another at her child's arrival, and that one later returning the favor.

Tascosa had no owman's woman's clubs. Women were too busy, keeping their families and helping with the living. Many women were wives of ranchers who were away from

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home a great part of the time. Wives of merchants were busy, too. Some women had hotels and restaurants.

No canning was done by the women, nothing was ther there to can. Canned goods were bought at the stores. Gardens could be raised around Tascosa because of the creek and river waters and sub-irrigated land, better than on the dry plains.

Mrs. Snider planted the first sweat potatoes in Tascosa. People had not seen them there before.